

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's **OTHER** Newspaper

COUNCIL STRUGGLES TO MAKE DECISION

SITE FEVER

SIXTEEN years after the Caravan Sites Act was passed, Hackney Council is still struggling to find spaces for 15 Travellers caravans in the borough.

After the 1982 elections the 'New Left' administration established a Travellers Working Group to show its commitment to fulfil its legal obligations. In March this year the group produced a six-site shortlist and embarked on a consultation exercise.

The proposed sites are: 84-110 Bouverie Rd, N16; Grandsden Ave/London La, E8; Lauriston Rd/Holcroft Rd, E9; 41/69 Morning La, E8; Niagara Works, Farston Rd, N1 and Margaret Rd, N16.

Until the recent Council annual meeting the Travellers Working Group was chaired by Cllr Mary Cannon and included three other members of the Policy and Resources Committee: Hilda Kean, Andrew Puddephat and John Bloom.

The fifth member was Jim Holland. Councillors from each of the wards concerned were also invited to participate in the working group, which also included officers from the Planning, Environmental Health and Housing Departments.

In the wake of the meetings the working group was due to meet with Travellers, local community representatives and councillors to select sites to pass on to the Policy and Resources Committee, for them to forward to the full council meeting in June. This meeting has not yet taken place and it is not yet clear whether the council will make up its mind in June.

FURTHER DELAYS

According to council documents: "After obtaining planning permissions and DoE approvals, contracts and site-development will take about nine months. On this basis a site should be ready for occupation by late 1986 or early 1987."

Mike McCarthy, Secretary of the London Roadside Travellers Group told HPP: "I don't know what they expect us to do while the sites are being built."

The Travellers, the GLC's

Ethnic Minority Unit, Hackney Black People's Association and the Irish in Britain Representation Group, who organised a May 7th meeting at the Town Hall on the issue, are calling on Hackney Borough Council to adopt a no harassment policy. This involves establishing a dialogue with the travellers and providing assistance from the Race Relations office, rather than continually evicting them.

Critics of the consultation exercise accused the council of paving the way for a climb down. As a result of the publicity surrounding the public meetings, unofficial anti-traveller groups were formed in some of the areas, most notably around the Lauriston and Bouverie Road sites.

The Irish in Britain Representation Group commented: "Travellers are being thrown to the wolves: as a minority there is no way they can outnumber the local protesters."

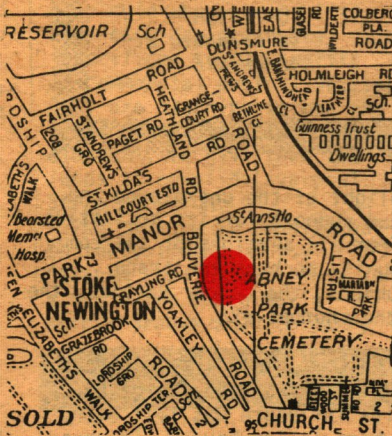
One community activist described the meetings as "large, vociferous and generally hostile". The prevailing attitude, with a few exceptions, among ward councillors and 'respectable' anti-racist citizens was that of course the council should do something for travellers, but not in their neighbourhood: none of the proposed sites could adequately cater for the Travellers 'special' way of life.

According to Jim Holland, some of the meetings degenerated into "irrational, uncalled for and untrue racism."

Mike McCarthy explained the Travellers reactions to the meetings: "They were things we've heard a thousand times. Criticism is a part of our life; if we were to lose it, that would be like losing an arm."

"The people who sign the petitions against us have never sat down and talked to a Traveller man or woman," he said. McCarthy was also scathing about councillors who were all for Travellers' rights, as long as they didn't affect their ward.

Andrew Puddephat, Jim



The three most likely sites.

Holland and Bob Bradford, the Environmental Health Officer the Travellers call 'the complaint collector', turned up at the May 7th meeting.

Jim Holland said that the council intended to "slightly improve" on the minimum legal requirements, and that the final siting decisions would be taken solely on planning grounds and not be influenced by the number, influence or racism of opposition groups.

"The council's institutional failure has allowed fear and apprehension to build up," said Puddephat. "We're very serious about talking to local people and to do this thoroughly takes time. It's no good forcing sites down people's throats."

When one member of the audience asked Puddephat if he could give a wholehearted assurance that the council would succeed in establishing the sites, he was unable to do so. At least he was honest.

There are still too many obstacles in the Travellers path, and the council leadership is in a grey zone where bureaucratic 'thoroughness', and inertia, are beginning to look an awful lot like institutional racism.

The householders who fear what the 'gypsy menace' might do to value of their property might ask themselves what would have happened if locals had organised themselves to oppose gentrification.

People who pronounce about the difficulty of dealing with increased 'crime, mess and traffic' may also find that these apprehensions are a lot easier to deal with than their own fear, ignorance and prejudice.

OVER THE TOP!



ON April 28 soon after dawn seven women from Hackney Greenham Groups were arrested inside the USAF cruise missile base at Greenham Common. Women were dancing and singing at the time of the arrest.

One of the women said, "We were arrested under the new by-law introduced (without debate in Parliament) by the Secretary of State for Defence using his powers under Part 2 of the Military Lands Act 1892. The by-law refers to Molesworth and Greenham."

We went into the base to protest both against the presence of American cruise missiles at Greenham and the authoritarian change in the law that makes it a criminal offence simply to walk on the designated land. (Previously and even today elsewhere it is necessary to prove that a person has committed 'criminal damage' to prosecute in connection with trespass.)

WOMEN CHARGED

The Ministry of Defence Criminal Investigation Department dealt with the questioning and charging of the seven women together with two others from the women's peace camp involved in this action.

Women were taken to the new Portakabins set up on the base to process the hundreds of women breaking the new by-law. (At least 145 women to date have entered the base and been

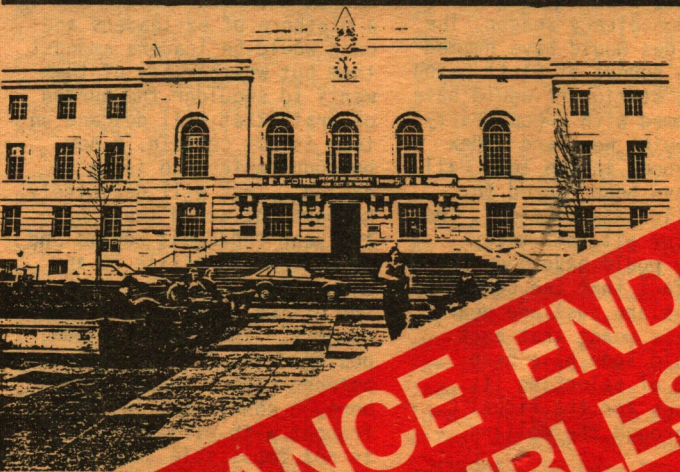
charged since the law became effective in early April.)

Women were taken one at a time to be charged. The first five were threatened with being detailed if they did not allow themselves to be photographed. They were told it was a condition of bail. When they protested and tried to hide their faces photos were 'stolen' by a CID photographer hiding behind a screen, using a polaroid camera.

The remaining four women, however, jointly refused to comply with the CID officer's instructions to remove their scarves. After being held for a further three hours, and being subjected to a good deal of persuasion, they were eventually released WITHOUT being photographed.

In photographing people who have not been found guilty of any offence the police are certainly acting illegally. They are anticipating the Police Act which will not become effective for many months yet. They could not cite the powers they were using. They were also systematically misinforming us of our rights and using threatening behaviour.

"Four of us lodged formal complaints with the senior officer MOD police, Greenham Air Base the same afternoon on being released. We have also informed the National Council for Civil Liberties who are taking the matter up with the Base and with Members of Parliament."



DEFIANCE ENDS IN SHAMBLES

How the ratecapping campaign fell apart

FULL STORY see pages 4 & 5

THE C.P. - WHAT WENT WRONG

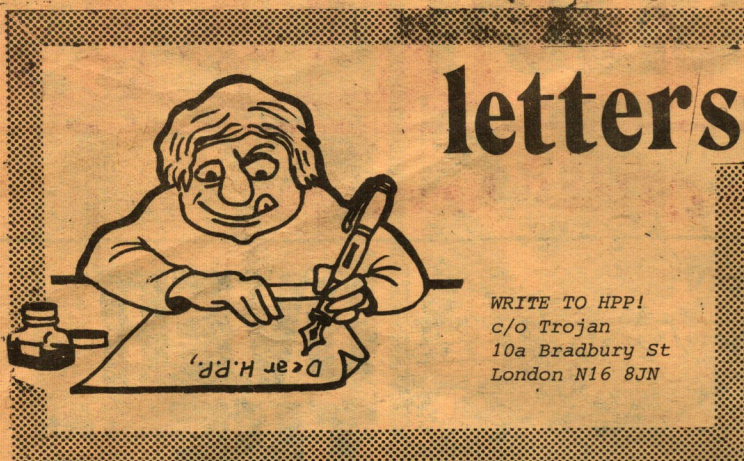
Dear Editor,

Reading your letters in this month's Hackney People's Press I noticed a very interesting letter by a M. Regan with his concern about the degeneration of the Communist Party not only in Hackney, but in the country in general.

As one who in the thirties was inspired by the Communist Party and feels with regret that it has allowed itself to trail behind other parties, because it has ceased to have any influence with the working class as in the past. To think at one time the C.P. had two councillors in Hackney and other Communist candidates being prevented becoming councillors by only a few votes.

The influence of the Communist Party in Hackney made Herbert Morrison wish to have another seat as member of Parliament elsewhere, the Communist Candidate a Bill Rust who until his death was the Editor of the Daily Worker who obtained five thousand votes for the Communist Party in the 1945 General Election.

The influence of the C.P. was realised for no other reason than its being the vanguard of the working class. This was seen when the C.P. took



the lead in the struggle against fascism in the thirties, also because of the help they gave to the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War

On the industrial front, the there again it was the C.P. that was the vanguard of the working class, with its Daily Worker giving a lead for organised trade unionism.

unemployed

The unemployed were able to look to the C.P. in the Unemployed Struggles, and many an unemployed person of those days thanked the C.P. and the Daily Worker at the way the ugly side of capitalism was exposed and the help those unfortunate unemployed were given to get the allowances from the Labour Exchanges, with the help of the specially created unemployed movement of those days called "The Unemployed Workers Movement" an organisation that showed the

plight of the unemployed and had support for its activities from all sections of the community such as the trade unions, the Labour Parties, the churches etc.

The Communist Party of Great Britain was never large but its influence was felt every where in its heyday. It never had more than two members of parliament, who gave the parliamentary reactionaries a headache from the days they were elected.

Two of the reasons for the loss of faith in my opinion are the so-called "British Road to Socialism" which is exactly the opposite and reason for a serious break-away party from the C. P. G. B. which in the most difficult conditions tries to keep the red flag flying, then they suddenly took up this question of Eurocommunism, forgetting that in Eastern Europe since 1944 we have practical Euro

Communism given help to establish Communism in Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union.

Another reason for lack of credibility of the C.P. G.B. has been its anti-sovietism, this in itself drove many loyal Communists from the C.P. At times, many of the write-ups in the "Falling Star" in their hostility to the USSR were equal to the corrupt media and press.

I look forward to the day when the C.P. will be once more the vanguard of the working class: something we must not miss because of the deep crisis the working class are confronted with today, and the struggle for PEACE. Most sincerely,

A. Sirotkin
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex.

Gone underground

Dear HPP,

Sheila Webb in her article on the miners said that she would miss the collections and camaraderie now that the miners had returned to their homes.

I might tell you that there are still collections at Dalston Sainsbury's on Thursday, 5-7pm. on Saturdays 10.30am--3.30pm; at Marks and Spencers Mare St on Saturday and Safeways at Stamford Hill on Saturdays.

If she gets in touch with the Miners' Support Committee which meets at the Centre for the Unemployed, 485 Kingsland Road on Monday nights at 7pm, she will find many

other activities.

It is still important to keep collecting to pay for the costs of legal enquiries into the status of jailed and sacked miners and to show the general public that the miners are not defeated.

Continuing collecting also shows that we, both men and women, are not too scared to support a battle which has literally gone underground, and so been displaced from the streets and the tv screens.

Yours,

Damian Durka

Trumpet blowing

Dear HPP,

I have just read the latest copy of the People's Paper and I have to tell you that it is the best I have ever read. The account of the Council meeting where the vote on rate capping was being taken is excellent and actually manages to catch the atmosphere of the occasion. I feel sorry that I was not there! Also you have used the fact that some people voted against to have a go at these squalid individuals and that is also to be welcomed.

The page on the miners is also good and there appears to be little or no stuffing in the paper. This style can only win admiration.

Yours,

Pete Gold



Back in the old days, this would have been the beginning of the conspiracy season. The phone lines would have hummed with the sounds of plots being hatched, stationers would have been jammed with Labour Party hacks buying new card index boxes, rooms in the Town Hall would have been booked for "Councillor X's meeting". The reason for all this merry activity would have been the simple fact that the Council elections are just one year away. This meant that each ward would soon have been thinking of selecting its candidates for the ritual dance through the polling booths.

This year, there is no need for conspiracies. The battle lines are already drawn and the hostility between those who voted to set a rate and those who maintained a position of defiance to the end is open and out on the table.

It is unclear yet whether the minority (and it is important to remember that it is a minority) who voted for the

Millwood budget will attempt to run the Council. There are a plethora of ex-leaders and once would-be leaders amongst them but whether any of them wants to shoulder the burden of wrath that will descend on them is not certain. A new borough conference is to be called. This will definitely support the stand taken by the Kean-Puddephat regime and be extremely hostile to any councillors who try to run for office without their support. The constitutional position about the relationship between Labour Group and the borough conference is also fraught with difficulty. It is not impossible that the whole thing will end up in the courts - and nobody will be laughing harder than Patrick Jenkin if that should occur.

The coalition that brought down the no-raters was the big romance between Hilda Kean's two predecessors as leader, Anthony Kendall and John Kotz. And the Romeo who brought them together

was none other than that infrequent visitor to the Town Hall, Charles Clarke (known to the Liberals as Councillor Kinnock.) Despite the rarity of his trips down Mare Street these days, Charles spent quite a bit of time doing a deal here and a deal there and bringing every one together - or, at least, everyone who could be relied on to bring home the bacon.

Anthony and Johnny - who were at loggerheads for years - are now on such chummy terms that they put forgiving arms round each others shoulders and enter in mutual congratulation sessions about each others speeches. What may well happen now, when Kendall gets deselected in his own Northwold ward, is that he pops up again in Chatham, the ward represented by both Kotz and Clarke, and where they both have a lot of influence.

The debacle over the rates has really brought the ghosts of the 1970s back into the Council chamber. We'll probably see such great statespersons as Charlie Cable, Max Feldman and Bob Masters assuming a leading role. One is almost expecting Martin Ottolengui to walk in the door. The half of the Kendallite wing that brought this lot in have got a lot to answer for.

The biggest obstacle for whoever takes the hot seat is likely to be the Town Hall unions. After many years of autocratic and disastrous management by both councillors and senior officers, the manual unions appeared to have found a leadership with whom they could work. That is

not to say that there weren't difficulties, which of course, there were. But there seemed to be some respect and trust built up, not least in the Housing Department, so often a scene of disaster.

There is one final point that should be raised about the situation on the Council. You may have noticed that these idle reflections have presumed one thing: that the Labour Party will still be in charge after May 1986. It is, of course, entirely possible that someone else will be occupying the leader's office from then. . . Stranger things have happened in Hackney before. As Johnny Kotz so often used to remind us, the Tories actually ran the borough between 1968 and 1971. That is something that is most unlikely to

takeover?

happen again. But the results of the recent two Council by-elections show that the Liberals, despite what Brian Sedgmore has been writing in the Hackney Gazette, are not at all a spent force. They held the Haggerston seat quite comfortably, and succeeded in getting a massive (for a Council) by-election turn out of 39%. David Gamper for leader of the Council? I think not, but I would take bets that the Liberals do no worse next year than they did before in Shoreditch, and would not be at all surprised if they got their representation up into double figures.

Reselection and deselection is of course a matter that occupies the minds of those with mightier aspirations than a seat on Hackney Council. Our two white male MPs are filling just the kinds of seats that right on people say should now be taken by and fought by black and/or women candidates. Will both Brian Sedgmore and Ernie Roberts be the candidates for Labour at the next General Election? I will be returning to this subject in due course, but again I would accept bets that this will be so. Ernie has now decided that he wants to serve the people of the borough until he is at least the same age as David Weitzman and Brian Sedgmore is displaying a frantic level of activity in his bid to remain numero uno in the South. One little tit bit for the gossip columns which I hand to you now: Brian has just penned yet another book, this time a novel with many scenes of political skulduggery, derring do and passion. The romantic lead, found in a clinch with the hero on page one, is called Glenys. Does this mean that Brian is destined for high office in the Kinnock government? Or has he impuned the name of the person who should really be the leader of the Labour Party? I think we should be told. And indeed we will, since HPP is going to review this novel in a very few weeks. But as yet, we haven't read it! So you will have to wait till then to find out. Or fork out for the hardback.

Powell threat to abortion rights

One of the first major national demonstrations since the miners strike took place on Saturday 27, when 2,000 people marched from Lincoln Inns Fields to Trafalgar Square to oppose Enoch Powell's Unborn (Children) Protection Bill.

Anti-racists marched in support of the Newham 7 on the same day.

The Powell bill is a thinly disguised attack on abortion rights, and if passed could cause a serious threat to existing legislation and certain forms of contraception, such as the coil.

The bill would make it illegal for a human embryo to be 'created, kept for use of any purpose other than enabling a child to be borne by a particular woman.' It is dangerously close to becoming law.

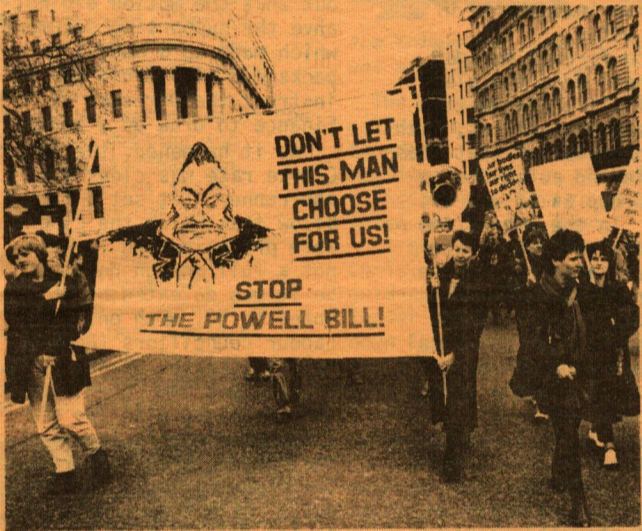
Embryo research is needed to understand diseases and conditions like Down's

Syndrome, cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy. It can also help overcome infertility.

Powell's bill is part of an ultra-right offensive against hard-won abortion and contraceptive rights. Last year the High Court ruled in the Victoria Gillick case that it was illegal to give contraceptive advice to people under 16.

The ruling means that family planning clinics risk prosecution for giving basic sex education to under 16s. The British Medical Association has reported two suicides related to underage pregnancies and predicts a huge increase in unwanted pregnancies among that age group.

The National Abortion Campaign has produced a petition against the Bill. For more information, contact NAC at: Wesley House, 70 Great Queen Street, WC2. Tel: 405 4801.



Private attack

PRIVATISATION is rearing its ugly head in Hackney. Jobs, working conditions, hours and pay are all under major attack. The government has just issued a Green Paper listing the local authority services it now wants to go to private contractors: parks, street cleaning, road maintenance and catering.

In the NHS, City and Hackney Health Authority have for the past year refused to put forward a programme for privatising catering, laundry and domestic services as demanded by the 1983 Government Circular. However in February, despite sustained lobbying from unions, patients and pressure groups, the Authority gave in threats to future funding and hints that their resistance could delay the opening of the new Homerton Hospital and voted 9-8 to carry out the programme.

A privatisation panel of 4 has been set up by the Health Authority, members of the panel are meeting with officers

of the Authority to discuss the legal, financial and contractual issues raised by the new policy. The panel is to report to the full Authority before any decisions are made. This should happen before the May 20th meeting.

Meanwhile health workers in the area are under pressure from their managers to increase productivity, tighten schedules and cut back on sick leave. The individual unions involved are holding meetings with their members to plan a course of action to protect jobs and services and fight scare-mongering rumours.

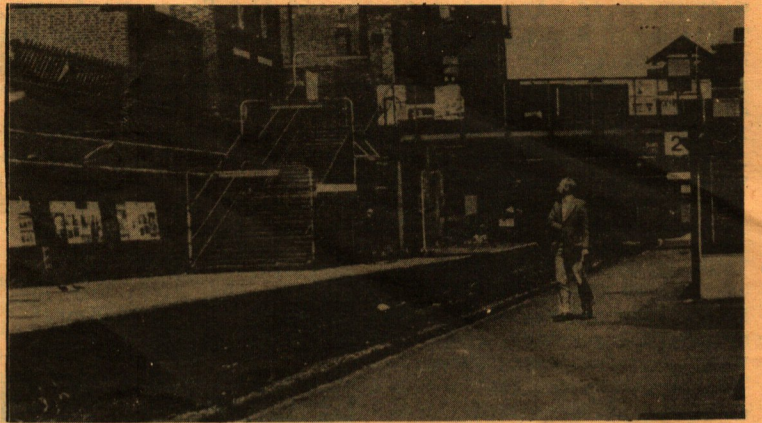
City and Hackney Health Authority faces drastic cuts, closures and reorganisation over the next two years. Three hospitals are scheduled for closure (The Mothers, St Matthew and The German - the last may stay open until the late 80's) when the new Homerton opens. Before any job losses from privatisation 300 jobs will go under the centralisation on the Homerton site.

DEATH FOR LINK

The Minister of Transport, Nicholas Ridley, has dealt another blow to the people of Hackney by announcing the final death blow to Dalston Junction and Broad Street stations.

The needs of the hundreds of people who use the City Link each day are being sacrificed to the profits of commercial profit. British Rail are planning to use the Broad Street site for redevelopment, to give them the funds to rebuild Liverpool Street station.

The closure is conditional on the building of the "Graham Road curve". This is a new curve being built across Graham Road to carry



the peak hour Watford trains switched from the North London Line to the tracks from Hackney Downs to Liverpool Street. In the mean time, the Watford trains will continue to use Dalston Junction and Broad Street. However, the main North London Line will divert from Broad Street to North Woolwich, replacing the diesel service on that line.

The decision ends a 15 year fight by many local groups and passengers and Hackney, Islington, Camden and Brent Councils

against the closure. The most recent round was the hearing of the London Regional Passenger Committee, the "watchdog" set up by law to advise the Minister on closures.

The LPRC recommended that the City Link be maintained and catered for by the new Liverpool Street high level platforms. The Minister chose to ignore what they said.

HPTAC will however be continuing the campaign to retain the Link. Contact at 380 Old St, EC1 (739 5137).

INQUIRY BEGINS

THE Roach Family Support Committee has commissioned a seven person independent committee of inquiry into policing in Hackney. The committee met for the first time on Saturday, 13 April 1985. In the chair is the Rev. David Moore of Bristol. The other members are Cllr Merle Amory, Melissa Benn, Fara Brown, Paul Gordon, Gus John and A. B. Ngcobo.

The Committee of Inquiry was selected to avoid those who are or who have been involved with community issues in Hackney, in order to preserve a measure of independence.

The inquiry will investigate policing trends in Hackney since the war and will consider in particular: the circumstances surrounding the death of Colin Roach; Stoke Newington Police Station; and the relationship between the police and the black community.

The police, interested individuals and organisations in Hackney have been approached for submissions. The police have indicated that they will refuse to co-operate, but Ernie Roberts has said he will take part.

HEMA £s

HACKNEY borough council has finally made funds available to employ three workers at the Hackney Ethnic Minorities Alliance (HEMA).

HEMA's plans have been in limbo since the beginning of the year, when the council approved the group's funding application. Each of the new workers will concentrate on one of HEMA's three wings: Afro-Caribbean, Asian and Cypriot.

"This has been a long, long fight," said HEMA member Andreas Michaelides. "HEMA has nobody to thank but its own member groups for continuing the fight to get what we believe is the minimum we deserve."



Shuttleworth's Hotel, Well Street. A hostel often used for the single homeless in Hackney.

Aimless move

'Move on! Your time is up! You've been here two months'. This is the predicament in which young homeless people, at present or in the future, living in board and lodging accommodation may find themselves. For example, people under 26 born in Hackney, who have lived here all their lives, may be forced to move temporarily to Manchester or Birmingham to be replaced in Hackney by those forced to move from Manchester, Birmingham or any other part of the country. This is aimless movement, not purposeful seeking for jobs; not a policy one would expect any responsible government to encourage.

CHAR - the Campaign for the Single Homeless - has described the proposed new DHSS regulations, due to come into force on April 29, and designed to save the government money, as showing callous indifference to homeless people.

The DHSS limit for board and lodging has been reduced to £70 in London, with limits elsewhere between £70 and

£45. Eight weeks is now the official time limit that most able-bodied single people and childless couples under 26 who are unemployed and dependent on social security may stay in London, with limits elsewhere between eight and two weeks.

CHAR urges the government to provide more money for permanent housing for single people; to end restrictions on furniture grants for those who are offered permanent accommodation, but who have insufficient savings with which to buy furniture; for those still in board and lodgings, the rents landlords can charge to be controlled, together with what claimants can pay, taking local conditions into account; standards in bed and breakfast accommodation to be inspected and controlled.

These improvements in their prospects would give young single people the chance of a settled life and hopefully would improve their job prospects.

DAYS OF DEFIANCE

HACKNEY'S 76 DAYS of defiance of the Government are over. On Thursday 7 March, amid scenes of jubilation, emotion and solidarity only nine Labour councillors voted against the agreed policy of not setting a rate until the Tory Government recognised that Hackney could not run its services and protect jobs without proper funding. On Wednesday 22 May a further 15 Labour councillors joined them and, with the opposition, forced through a budget that will mean certain cuts this year.

This act has already led to the resignation of the leader, deputy leader, four committee chairs and vice-chairs (and the possibility

of other resignations from office of others who will refuse to operate a cuts budget.) The Labour Group on the Council is in total disarray since a narrow majority (26 to 24) voted to continue the policy of not setting a rate. At a stroke the minority wrecked the unity built over months between the Council, its workforce and many community and ethnic minority groups.

What went wrong? How did it all happen? In this special feature HPP looks at how Hackney's defiance collapsed while the Government just sat back waiting. No commissioners, no prison, no surcharges. Merely the Council, and Labour Party, in a shambles on their own.

THERE ARE 60 seats on Hackney Council, of which 50 are held by the Labour Party. Thus to be passed any motion needs 31 votes, from whatever source. The reason why the continued defiance collapsed is explained quite simply by the arithmetic of the Labour Group on the Council. This was split almost exactly down the middle. Those who supported the leader Hilda Kean, and her position of refusing to set a rate, never numbered more than 26 out of 50 on many occasions throughout the ratecapping saga. This can be seen by looking in detail at the results of three separate crucial votes throughout the campaign.

The McCafferty amendment 27 March.

Less than 3 weeks after the "historic" decision to go illegal on 7 March, the Council voted on an amendment by John McCafferty which would have toughened (slightly) the stance they were taking. This was lost by 32 votes to 24 although the Council went on to reaffirm the motion passed on 7 March. The 24 who voted for the McCafferty amendment all voted against the Tony Millwood budget nearly two months later. And their numbers were only swelled to 26 by the addition of Ken Hanson (on holiday on 27 March) and Felicity Harvest (winner of a by-election on 2 May).

Adjournment motion 13 May

Nearly seven weeks later the Council met after the Liberals had requested a special meeting. Amid rumours that a surprise budget was to be sprung from the Labour benches, a motion to adjourn was proposed by Jim Cannon. This was opposed by the leadership but defeated by 32 votes to 24. Of the 26 who voted against the Millwood budget only Marcelle Chissick voted for the adjournment and John Chanin was absent. (In the event, the adjourned meeting was never held, due to the occupation of the Town Hall by the unions - see below.)

The Millwood budget 22 May

This was the final vote of the sequence of five full Council meetings, countless Group meetings and any number of caucuses, committees and informal get-togethers. The budget was passed with all members of the Council present (currently 59, with a vacancy in a Liberal-held seat). The budget was voted through by 33 to 26. This figure of 26 votes in favour of the leadership position was, in fact, the most that the leadership ever got, in any vote for outright defiance, throughout the campaign. In that sense it is obvious that the cards

were stacked against the position that Hilda Kean and her deputy Andrew Puddephat took from the very beginning.



THE FIRST signs of rebellion in the Labour ranks came within two weeks of the 7 March decision. On Wednesday 20 March a Labour Group policy sub-committee meeting was presented with a draft budget by the Borough Treasurer John Beha, whose advice all along has been that a legal rate could and should be set. Although the meeting decided, on Hilda Kean's casting vote, to press on with the refusal to set a rate, the Tony Millwood and Anthony Kendall faction amongst the senior councillors claimed that Beha's figures showed that it was possible to set a rate within the Government's ratecap limit and, they said, not make cuts in jobs and services. They leaked the document to the Hackney Gazette. Even the Sunday Times carried a story saying that Hackney would climb down the following week.

25 March: Labour Group

27 March: Council

THE RESPONSE by the leadership was emphatic. At the Labour Group meeting on 25 March a motion to harden the Council's position was lost by 23 votes to 22. But although there were rumours of a rebellion planned for the Council meeting two days later, none materialised. John McCafferty's amendment, which was in much the same terms as the motion proposed in group was defeated by 32 votes to 24 at the Council meeting. But a motion to continue the campaign was in fact carried by a larger majority than that of 7 March: 45 votes to 9. Maureen Colquhoun was the only Labour councillor to vote against, and George Wintle, the Liberal who had broken ranks with his group, continued his personal support for the position of not setting a rate. Hilda Kean was pleased with the way in which the vote had gone, since it had been a

tactical device by her side to put up McCafferty's amendment, knowing that it would be lost, in order to get the main motion through.

16 April: High Court

ON A brilliant spring Tuesday a boisterous picket of councillors, Council workers and community activists waited outside the High Court for Mr Justice Woolf to give his judgement in the case brought against the Council by failed SDP candidate Mourad Fleming. Fleming had taken the Council to court a few weeks before in an attempt to get it to set a rate within a fixed period. The judge, in fact, displayed a most unjudicial reluctance to force the council to make an instant decision, and gave it to the end of May. This came as something of a relief to the leadership, who were already saying collectively that they would have to resign if they were defeated in the long run. But it provided a focus and a further deadline for those inside the Labour Group who were already planning their mutiny.

27 April: Council

At a regular Council meeting, normal business was conducted in a rather strange interlude in the war of attrition. Attempts by the Liberals and the Tories were made to propose budgets but these were voted down without any murmur of dissent on the Labour side. However, soon after this date the people who eventually broke ranks began to draw up their budget, based on the papers already supplied by John Beha.

11 May: Labour Party Borough Conference

The event that proved the breaking point for the turncoats was the Labour borough conference on 11 May. Last year this was the event that knocked Anthony Kendall out of the leadership and replaced him with Hilda Kean. There is no serious opposition now to the principle of extending the franchise for the election of leader, deputy leader, chief whip, Mayor and deputy mayor (the five positions currently elected by the annual conference). But since last year's conference there has been a suggestion floating around that the chairs and vice-chairs of all the various council committees be elected by the conference as well. This, to say the least, unwieldy extension of the powers of the conference, which would result in there being 28 extra elections if all the posts were contested, has not been

thoroughly debated by the party or the Labour Group since last year's conference. Indeed it required a change in the Group standing orders for the elections to be extended. Just before the conference, Labour Group, with little dissent, refused to extend its standing orders. This may or may not have been the trigger for what occurred at the conference, which ended in a bloodbath. 'The tomato ketchup really hit the fan,' in the words of one left councillor.

Before the conference, the guns were out for Mary Cannon, the chief whip. She had already been lukewarm in her support for the leadership line and voted on the other side in a number of crucial votes.

The conference decided to go ahead with the elections of all the committee chairs and vice-chairs, with the recommendation that these be considered as advice to Labour Group as to who to accept. In the event, the voting did not take place until well after 6pm - the conference had been going on all day - and it took place entirely on political lines, with councillors like Anthony Kendall being knocked off the chair of Leisure Services and Tony Millwood off Economic Development. Delegates gave very little consideration as to whether the people concerned had been good or bad as the chairs of what are quite often uncontroversial committees.

These decision angered those who were wavering over whether to continue to support the leadership. And since the borough conference many participants have privately agreed that it is probably not the best thing for the conference to insist on electing all the chairs of all the committees - let alone the vice-chairs. 'These are really just administrative positions, not political appointments,' one party official told HPP. 'There is certainly a feeling that they don't need to be elected by the conference as a whole.'

13 May: Council

This meeting was called by the Liberals and had been arranged on the same night as the annual general meeting of the Labour Group. The tactic that the leadership had decided on was simply to vote against whatever the Liberals and Tories proposed and get the meeting over with as soon as possible. However, that didn't quite work out. A small number of activists, journalists and trade unionists present in the gallery were beginning to wonder if they'd all been

dragged there under false pretences.

The expected 'sophisticated Liberal' budget, which Tony Millwood had been working on for some time, was not presented but a hare was set off in the shape of a motion from Howard Pallis and Charles Clarke, which proposed a rate rise of 8.5%. This was roundly condemned by a number of speakers, moving a budget that would clearly mean cuts when few of the public were there. Martin Whitfield described the motion as appalling: 'It shows no understanding of what we've been doing for the last six months. It is an insult to the borough conference.'

Andrew Puddephat pointed out that the motion did not have the supporting documents which made up a budget package. All it did was to instruct the Director of Finance to draw up a budget.

As it happened, the Pallis/Clarke rate was clearly a non-runner. It set a rate below that which the Liberals were proposing and it was not a full enough document. So it was defeated by 46 votes to 10, with only four Labour councillors (Howard Pallis, Charles Clarke, Linda Hibberd and Sam Cohen) voting for it, along with the six Liberals, despite the fact that it was a lot lower than their own motion. The Tories voted against it, probably on the grounds that it was not going to pass. By the time the final vote was taken on the later Millwood budget nine days later, they had modified their own position to vote for any legal budget.

Then Jim Cannon played another card. He proposed that the meeting be adjourned until Thursday of that week, three days later. This was despite the fact that a regular Council meeting was already due in only eight days' time. Despite opposition from the leadership and those concerned with holding the line, this was then decided. Gery Lawless remarked that the evening reminded him of the Sherlock Holmes story where the clue was the dog didn't bark. The meeting was adjourned, and the Labour councillors we went on to their annual general meeting of the group.

13 May: Labour Group

Once more the tomato ketchup was all over the floor. But this time the right had got their hands firmly on the Heinz bottle. In revenge for the borough conference only 48 hours before, the 'advice' so thoughtfully proffered was overturned by the Group. Out went John McCafferty (staffing/equal opportunities), John Bloom (housing) and

END IN SHAMBLES

Martin Whitfield (planning). In came Jim Cannon, previously a chair under both Kendall and Kean, and two real old stagers from the pre-1982 days, Joannie Andrews and John Kotz himself, the sometime leader and perpetual power behind the throne for most of the seventies.

Here was where the real split in the party was demonstrated. The group that had ruled the party for two years under Anthony Kendall was split in two. On one side were Kendall, Jim and Mary Cannon, Tony Millwood, Richard and Ruth Gee. On the other were Andrew Puddephat, Peter Kahn, Denise Robson, John McCafferty. The first lot had always been half-hearted about not setting a rate and now they had reached a stage where they had decided to call a retreat. Their allies were to be found in the motley collection of Old Guarders who still prop up a number of seats on the back benches: Steve Scott, Bob Masters, Bob and Matilda Owen, Charlie Cable, and the like. The natural leader of all these is John Kotz.

No quarter was given at the annual Group meeting and even Bella Callaghan got re-elected as its chair, despite the custom and practice decreeing this should change every year. The vote for Callaghan was probably swelled because her opponent was Gery Lawless, who would hardly be on anyone's list of candidates of maximum unity.

16 May: Town Hall Occupation

Members of the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee had heard rumours that the Council was going to set a rate at its reconvened meeting. Tony Millwood and Howard Pallis circulated a formal motion to the Labour Group, arguing that a rate should be set, and included a budget. In the circular was a budget working on the principle of a 13.7% increase. Most councillors received this proposal on the morning of Thursday, 16 May.

At lunch time outside the town hall was a large wedding party, while around the doors and inside the lobby various shop stewards loitered. They were showing a presence until 2pm, when a meeting was to be called. The JSSC would then advise a all town hall workers that they should go home to stop the proposed council meeting from proceeding.

Alf Sullivan, member of EEEPTU and secretary of the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, said, 'We always considered that the budget was a cut in jobs and services. We are opposed to setting any rate that takes government penalties into account. It has stolen £70m from us over the past five years. The adjournment of Monday's meeting brought the normal Council meeting forward. There seemed to be some ulterior motive for this -

for example a test of the unions.'

At 5.30, JSSC representatives gave an assurance that they weren't holding Hilda Kean hostage and that discussions so far had been quite cordial. 'The leader had some sympathy,' said Sullivan, who explained that all the unions wanted was an assurance that no council meeting would be held until the scheduled 21 May meeting.



Joe Lobenstein looking for yet another interviewer.

The ever valiant Tory councillor Chris Sills went up to the door. 'I've come for the meeting,' he said. '(Unintelligible) off' replied a voice behind the door.

'I shall come back,' vowed Chris, leaving in search of guidance from his chums. His leader Joe Lobenstein hunted down the media to tell them about the 'spectre of mob rule' in Hackney.

Finance Director, John Beha, would not be drawn, too much, outside the front of the occupation, on the legal implications of the action, but said that the Millwood-Pallis budget was essentially a modification of the Liberal budget, but that it would mean cuts in jobs and services compared with the 'growth' budget favoured by the Kean-Puddephat group. 'It will have severe implications for next year,' said Beha, 'that is when the shit hits the fan.' The 13.7% increase would work out at £112m.

By 8pm the occupation was over. Mayor Ken Hanson had formally decided that there was no quorum for a Council meeting and had abandoned it.

21 May: Council

THE RALLY outside the Town Hall as councillors arrived for the meeting on 21 May was in no mood to compromise. Shop stewards standing at the top of the steps announced their names as each came up and those who supported the Millwood budget were put in no doubt as to what Council workers and community activists wanted them to do. 'No rate! No rate! We want to keep our jobs!' was the repeated cry. Speakers from other ratecapped boroughs - council workers and members - offered support and solidarity.

When the meeting started, Alf Sullivan, the Joint Shop Stewards Committee secretary, was invited to address the meeting. He asked those members who were thinking of

voting for a rate: 'What has changed to make you want to change your stand? You're not even bloodied and now you want to retreat. You knew what you were getting into in March.'

Bhojan Chatterjee of the Hackney Black United Front was also invited to address the meeting. 'We have not given you a mandate to sell Hackney down the river,' he said. 'We did not return you to cut our jobs and services. If you are so tired and lack the will to fight, I ask you: resign! What kind of politics is this?'

Tony Millwood then got up to present his budget. 'I move this motion with mixed emotions,' he began, 'as the best way to protect jobs and services. It is now possible to move a budget without cuts. The Government are willing for Hackney to become a law and order problem. That would achieve cuts in double quick time. This budget retains much of the socialist content of Hackney.' (There was a great deal of ironic laughter at this point.) He went on: 'The leadership has given us no clear indication of what course events are likely to take after 31 May. The Government was willing to spend millions of pounds to defeat the miners. Can we believe that they will give in to Hackney?'

He went on to claim that his budget represented cuts of less than 3%, but that was from expansionary plans.

First on the attack was former deputy leader Peter Kahn. 'This year we've had unity like we've never had before. What are we going to say to the tenants, residents, trade unions and community groups? When the going gets tough,' he added, 'Hackney councillors get going.'

Speaker after speaker poured scorn on the proposal. Chris Spencer said that there had been an uprising of people against this proposal. It had been expected that Hackney would have been the last to give in.

Gery Lawless warned those who were going to vote for the Lib/Lab budget. 'They are no longer part of the solution, they are part of the problem, the most dangerous part of the problem.'

Hilda Kean's speech began by not apologising for her anger with councillors who would have to explain why they hadn't taken the same stance last July and last December:

'This is a financially irresponsible budget, a cosmetic change of the Liberal budget, and even worse than theirs since it involves selling of Council assets and takes into account one-off payments related to the GLC stressed boroughs money.' She refuted a charge from Jim Cannon that financial information had not been available. It had been supplied to the JSSC and to anyone else that wanted to see it. 'The action we take tonight will determine the balance of political forces between the labour movement and the government.' Those councillors who were standing firm, members of the public and Council workers rose to give her a standing ovation as she finished her speech.

Many other speakers laid into Tony Millwood's budget, some

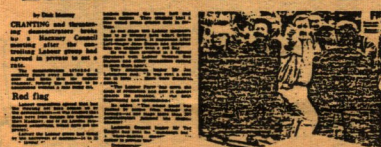
speaking in sorrow, some, like the leader, speaking in anger. Eventually the Mayor decided that it was time for the vote on the Tory amendment to be taken and he called Tony Millwood to reply to it. There then followed what can only be called a spontaneous surge of people from the Assembly Hall a few yards away from the Council Chamber into the chamber itself. Reports that a security guard had been 'lured away' (which is what the Standard said) were wrong. Actual witnesses who were in the Assembly Hall, watching the meeting on closed circuit TV, said that the surge was not planned at all.

The chamber was quickly filled with people echoing the chant from the public gallery: 'No rate! No rate!' Millwood stood bemused, but quite unable to make his voice heard above the row. Mayor Ken Hanson banged his gavel time and time again but the chant went on. Eventually he adjourned the meeting for a ten minute period. Joe Lobenstein swooped on the Standard reporter.



Labour council is forced to abandon meeting that would have set a rate

INVASION BY 'RENT A MOB'



And so it was that the meeting was finally adjourned until the following day. Pleas from Hilda Kean, from the officers of Hackney North and Hackney South Labour Parties were to no avail. There were rumours that the police had been called and demands made to know who had called them. There were a few minor scuffles but in general the occupation was good natured. But it was a delaying tactic, and no more, and every single person in the chamber knew it. The next day the rate would be set.

22 May: Council

THE RECONVENED meeting began in low key fashion, after the annual meeting had elected a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The committee chairs as nominated at the Group meeting were also elected. Some of these were to have a very short term of office.

Betty Shanks's first job as Mayor was to call Tony Millwood to speak. His speech and others by those who supported him were punctuated by angry shouting from the gallery. Tight security and locked doors prevented any extra people getting from the Assembly hall into the Council Chamber.

Millwood responded briefly on the Tory budget, which was promptly rejected. Then a Liberal amendment to the budget was put and the debate began again.

Lester Lewis said that the debate was essentially about whether the Labour councillors would stand firm against the injustices which the Tory Government was imposing on the people of Hackney.

Clancy Etienne, on the other hand, supported Tony Millwood.

Money was running out, he said and the prospect was that the Council would be taken out of their control. 'Whatever little socialist gains made will be lost overnight. If we hand services to the Tory Government they will cut those areas which were designed to give black people a fair share.'

Liberal councillor George Wintle gave notice that he was climbing off the 'no rate' bandwagon. This was not very surprising as the Millwood budget was so close to that being supported by his party.

More people were willing to speak in favour of the Millwood proposal than the previous day, perhaps sensing that with the public seats less crowded they might not get such a hostile reception. Ruth Gee attacked the leadership for not producing a deficit budget as a fallback position. Maureen Colquhoun said that the leadership had displayed 'sickening hypocrisy.' Anthony Kendall said that the budget not only protected the gains made in previous years but actually built on them.

The only speaker to attack the figures on which the budget was calculated was David Clark, who called them irresponsible and imprudent. It would involve £5.9 million direct cuts and a further £5 million allowed for as coming in from the District Health Authority could not be relied on. He forecast that the budget would mean 13% cuts in jobs and services.

Andrew Puddephat repeated his appeal of the previous evening. 'Do you genuinely believe that more resources for the people of Hackney are going to follow from this budget?' he asked. 'We do not propose to fight this Government with the Council services as our weapon. The budget will plunge not just the Council but the Labour Party into chaos. You will not be able to assemble an administration able to run it.'

After another speech from Hilda Kean and an intervention from Liberal leader David Gamper who complained that he hadn't been called, Tony Millwood summed up. He had very little to say. As the vote was taken, boos greeted everyone who voted for the budget. It was all over.

Then Betty Shanks announced that the leader and deputy leader would make statements. 'Don't do it, Hilda!' was shouted from the gallery. Kean's mind was made up and she read a short prepared statement. Puddephat's was even shorter. They would resign the next day at the Labour Party GCs meetings.

Four other members also resigned as chairs or vice-chairs of committees. In a bizarre scene, many people sang the Red Flag while Puddephat sat still, his head in his hands.

At the meetings of the GCs the news was received sadly. Millwood turned up but didn't stay to answer questions. Some tried to persuade Kean and Puddephat to stay, but they recognised it as a matter of principle.

And it is principle that has been sadly lacking throughout and has caused the worst split in the Labour Party that Hackney has probably ever seen.

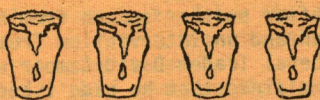
Pub of the Month

Opposite the Geffrye museum lies a Young's pub. These establishments, much loved by South Londoners and lovers of good beer, are sadly lacking in the Hackney area, where crowded free houses tend to provide for the discerning drinker.

The Royal Standard is an ordinary estate pub, situated on the Kingsland Road, on the corner with Hare Walk, E8. Built in the same inter-war brick of the surrounding council blocks, it seems to have little to comment it visually. Inside the style is mock Victorian, the lounge being populated with interesting exotic house plants, which outnumbered the customers when we were there on a Saturday night. In one corner there is a disused bandstand, though now the gentle sound of Human League is piped throughout. The most popular attraction is the pool table in the public bar.



The Young's Ordinary (87p) and Special (93p) bitter is not cheap, though we found it as drinkable as expected. With the Young's London lager at 97p and Guinness at £1, this was not a cheap night out despite the drab surroundings. Still if it is a quiet drink away from the crowds with London's favourite traditional bitter, then this is the place, although it seemed designed more for City workers making a summer lunchtime dash away from tourists, to sit out in the concrete beer garden luxuriating in the degradation of Shoreditch decay.



You can return to 'keg country' a short bus ride up the Kingsland Road at the Brewery Tap, near Dalston Junction. The uninspiring range of beers (Carlsberg, Ben, Watney's S.B.) distinguished it from its Real Ale neighbours but there are similarities in the large display of green foliage, some of it alive - though not for long it seemed. The plants were probably confused by the mirrors, designed no doubt to relieve the claustrophobia induced both by the size (a cat's whisker would be easily clipped during even a small swing) and the Sun-reader atmosphere. The proprietors at least tried to relieve the boredom by keeping on a TV kept on to watch Maurice Hope, perhaps, who was the pub here to judge by his many old photos hanging up.



Rio revamp

DESPITE cuts, rate-capping, and the government's other attempts to turn London into Sad City, the Rio, Hackney's only cinema is going ahead with two major projects to make it a more attractive and flexible venue.

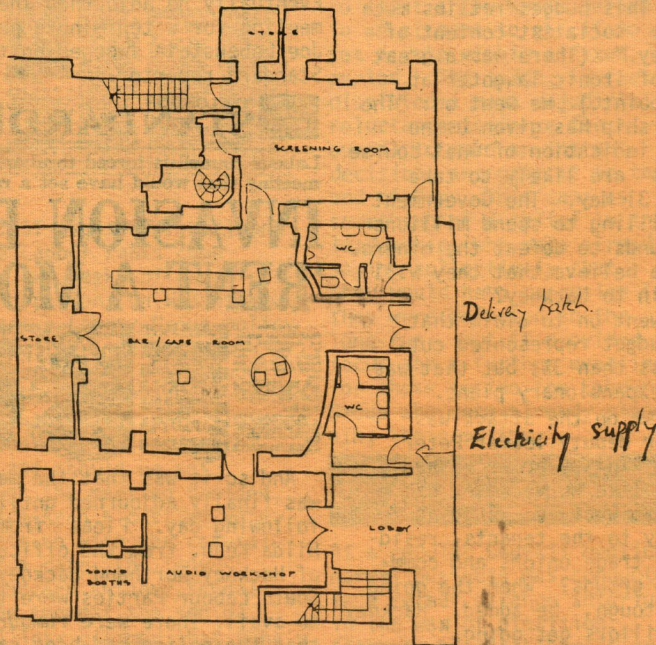
After a series of nerve-racking last-minute hitches a grant of £109,000 has been obtained from the GLC for extensive building work in the basement which should be completed by late summer. As can be seen from the plans there will be a separate entrance from the street to three new areas - a bar/cafe, a media workshop and a second screening room.

The bar/cafe is intended to make the Rio a much more active and versatile community centre where people can meet whether or not they are going to films. A brewery has shown interest in investing a

substantial sum in the fitting of this area and other local concerns may be interested in running the bar with cabarets and discos.

The workshop will be used by the Rio Slide Newsreel team and for designing community slide advertisements. It is hoped that other media groups will also make use of this resource.

The new screening room will seat approximately 30 people and is intended for use by local video groups and schools as well as for special screenings which cannot at present be shown in the main cinema because of the high costs involved. The Rio has inadequate funds to equip this area and are at present negotiating with WEFT Women's Media Collective who have a video projector and seats. It is hoped that this equipment could be installed in the new room and



NO MATE FOR THE MAGPIE

This is a colourful tragicomic first novel from Frances Molloy, of the life and times of wee Ann McGlone growing up in Northern Ireland in the fifties and sixties. Written in an unusual style, using Irish colloquialisms, the view of a young girl passing through adolescence, of her experiences and the events taking place around her is both entertaining and informative. It creates a panoramic vision of Ireland with its conflicts, struggles, beliefs and prejudices. The protagonist glides virtually unscathed through it all, never losing her adventurous spirit and retaining an honesty and optimism, enabling her to view life with an ironic eye.

Despite all her clear-sighted criticisms she can still feel compassion for the state of Ireland and its people. Her ingenuity and seeming innocence, aided by her small stature, guide her through the hypocrisy and small-mindedness of those around her.

She takes you through endless scrapes, recounted with passion and black humour plus a wicked sense of fun which makes the book all the more entertaining and compelling. Her succession

of jobs and escapades include working as a factory machinist a brief stint as a nun when she discovers that holy life is not quite the 'perfection' it is supposed to be, a companion to a lonely woman, a forced stay in a mental institution because of a sore neck, a maker of shrouds, demonstrating in Derry and Dublin in the late sixties and getting arrested until finally she decides to break away from the interminable tensions of her homeland.

No mate for the magpie, by Frances Molloy, Virago
Reviewed by Carolyn Slater.

VIVA!

US intervention in Central America seems an unlikely subject for a farce and Andy de la Tour's *Viva*, playing at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, until 8 May - frequently shifts from light comedy to bitter, black humour.

The setting is the Hotel IContinental - an effectively lurid gold and marble lobby with gilded ferns and heavily ornamented lift doors that contribute much of the

shared between WEFT and Rio users.

The second major development is re-seating the downstairs auditorium. 250 luxury reclining seats have been bought from the Warner West End in Leicester Square for the bargain price of £10 each. New seats for the balcony were available but could not be used as they were too large. The Rio needs an extra £2500 to meet the cost of this improvement and a major fundraising campaign is under way. Members and friends of the Rio are being asked to make donations; to stimulate the flow of funds a complementary ticket for two will be given for every £5 received. HPP readers who want to take advantage of this generous offer should go to the Rio with their cash or send it to 107 Kingsland High Street, London E8, phone 249. 2722 for more information.

Double trouble

THE RIO has clashed with one of the UK's big four film distributors 20th Century Fox over the cinema's value for money double feature programming policy.

Fox and the other majors are churlishly hostile to mixed billing where a new release is exhibited with an older film from a different distributor. This attitude is hard to understand as they get a percentage of all takings. Double features attract large audiences so the distributors can only stand to gain from them. Nevertheless three days after the Rio started their latest programme Fox phoned and threatened to remove 'Dance With a Stranger' if the supporting film was not immediately withdrawn. Faced with the loss of an outstanding new British film the Rio had little option but to agree.

The Brixton Ritzy was given the same ultimatum and now both independents are to mount a campaign to change restrictive distribution policies. As a spokesperson for the cinemas pointed out, 1985 is British Film Year and public statements by 20th Century Fox in support of this are totally at odds with their recent action.

slapstick element. This scene is a refuge for a multi-national dramatic personae: the indigenous president and his military officers, the American attache trying to avoid another Saigon and the wrath of General Glendinning, a corrupt and claustrophobic ex-Nazi archbishop, a true Brit (the only female character) in the shape of an outraged small-time journalist left behind by mistake, who is supposed to represent decency in the midst of depravity.

Add a panic-stricken hotel manager, his Manuel-type waiter, a bomb and a coffin,

The Club Cotton

Coppola's vision of Harlem of the twenties and thirties is a kaleidoscope of characters and costumes swirled into a world of music and dance.

Cornet player Dixie Dwyer (Richard Gere) is drawn into the world of the mob where he encounters Vera (Diane Lane), a gangster's moll. Scenes of mob rivalry and jealousy ensue, with the Cotton Club serving as a backdrop.

Gere performs in his usual puppet-like manner but is rescued occasionally by the script. His role alongside Diane Lane is rather predictable but, intermingled with other threads of the plot, is passable. Bob Hoskyns, as a prohibition racketeer, and his sidekick Fred Gwynne, are by far the best-looking couple of the film and make a wonderful double act.

gangland

The film continuously switches from dance routines to gangland warfare and racial conflicts and the plot is interspersed with sparkingly colourful scenes of musicians like Cab Calloway and a string of Ellington numbers. Gregory Hines, the Sandman, clicks his shoes across the stage of the club as, simultaneously, Dutch Shultz is wiped out of the mob hierarchy.

The varying moods and styles tend to overshadow scenes dealing with issues like racism and sexism. Nevertheless, The Cotton Club conveys the image of the glitter covering the dirt during Prohibition.

Unfortunately, the overall result appears too neat and tidy in its obvious attempt to create a nostalgic atmosphere of a time when talented black

nostalgia

artists performed for the rich and powerful whites and were only allowed into the clubs if they were appearing on stage.

The Cotton Club has to be viewed as more of a West Side Story than another Godfather as in many respects the plot is secondary to the music and dancing. If considered primarily as a musical it is well above average and whatever else, The Cotton Club is entertaining.

The Cotton Club will be playing shortly at the Rio Cinema.

and you have the ingredients of Andy de la Tour's first stage play. His origins as a stand up comic are manifested in the funny one-liners which counteract the sick jokes and allusions to Iran, Beirut or the Falklands.

As a political satire *Viva*'s direct but not always convincing; as a farce it is entertaining and as a night out at the theatre it is good value (especially for OAPs, students and calimants). It is to be hoped that financial cuts will not prevent the Theatre Royal from staging more plays of this kind.

Billy Who? Never 'heard of 'im.

You must have been going round with your eyes closed because Mr William Bragg is really in the news these days. This interest is partly due to his entry into the charts with 'Between the wars' and partly because of his involvement in the Labour Party's 'Jobs and industry' campaign.

'Between the wars' is the third record he has released, an e.p. even though anything other than albums have been shunned in the past, being suspected as a way to a fast buck. Not so in this case, the priority being a desire to get something out quickly that represents his current direction. It certainly does that. 'Life s a riot with Spy vs. Spy' (so called because he could not get to play in public; no one was interested in one man and a guitar until he invented a backing group, Spy vs. Spy;) and 'Brewing up', the two previous releases, are a mixture of love and politics whereas the e.p. is pure politics and also, unusually, contains two cover versions. This concentration possibly reflects his involvement in the Campaign for Jobs and industry.

In an attempt to bring the youth and Labour politicians together, Bragg has invited the latter along to his gigs to be quizzed by the potential future voters. The difference is that the MPs find themselves in a situation in which they may be ill at ease rather than the other way round, as is often the case.



Bragg's socialist ideals, born for him in the days of 'The Clash' and 'The Jam', are not just words, though perceptive and pertinent they often are (Between the wars is about now - the 3rd world war is coming?). He aims to use his talents to get people involved in working for something better. He puts this to actions, gets down from the stage after he's finished his slot and tries to persuade people in to action to make the jobs and industry campaign a success.

His ideals run consistently through his public life: all his records carry the 'pay no more than ...' mark and their price is cheaper than average, no arty pics of him on the covers; no videos, no make-up for Top of the Pops.

'I'm ugly. Why try to make me something I'm not?'

His straightforward manner and speech are in direct contrast with the

often trendy and obscure language of the music press and their subjects.

And now for the criticism. (Yes, there is some.)

Between the wars gives me the feeling that he's been listening to too many political folk songs from the '60s (and perhaps too many Labour politicians?). It sounds dated - perhaps he is a closet fan of the '60s revival? This is partly due to the use of 'the working man' and 'which side are you on, boys' type of language. Today, women are and should be very much involved. It seems he thinks in terms of a man where all this class fighting is concerned. . . But then, exactly how much can we expect of Billy from Barking. All true working-class people love the Queen, he reckons (including him). Perhaps this holds the key to an underlying touch of sexism?

To please all of the people is complex and difficult, but perhaps he should go back to the tried and tested formula of taking simple instances that portray a particular idea; this has worked so well in the past, for example in 'It says here' and 'The Saturday boys'. A line from the Saturday boys' that attracts my criticism says 'whilst she was giving herself at a party to which I was never invited' - further endorsement of the 'women give - men take' idea we can do without. Having said that this is probably my favourite track - soft, sentimental and an unashamed celebration of human frailty!

Go out and buy yourself one of his records, or better still get yourself along to one of his many gigs. But don't kid yourself that that's enough - this is the fun side of socialism, for once made easily accessible (who ever said there isn't one?)

Billy Bragg played Stoke Newington Town Hall last Thursday (11 April) for the GLC Jobs Year campaign.



Trojan makes move

Trojan Press is moving to new premises at the end of May. This is the fourth move since the co-op was founded in December 1979, and indicates the amount of growth that has occurred. In the last year turnover has doubled.

The Press is borrowing £25,000 from the London Co-operative Enterprise Board (repayable over the next five years) for capital investment. Trojan has bought a new high speed, high quality Czechoslovakian printing press (an Adast Dominant 515) which will increase the size and quality of jobs which it can tackle. It is also buying a Polar 90 programmable guillotine and a high speed suction feed paper folder.

The new premises at Downham Road are twice the size of the current premises in Bradbury Street and are part of a Hackney co-operative development ltd property scheme. The current phase of expansion also involves an increase in the workforce to seven workers (four women and three men).

HPP would like to take the opportunity to wish Trojan well in their new premises. As squatters in their offices, we have an interest in their welfare!

Their new address will be: Trojan Press, 25 Downham Road, London N1. Phone (unchanged) 249 5771

The Stamford Hill Information Project is in need of help and support. It is looking for volunteers to run the centre and to be appointed to the management committee.

The aim of the Centre is to promote racial equality and good community relations, especially between the Orthodox Jewish community and other communities, and to provide information.

Contact Rabbi Brand on 806 8028 if you would like to help.

Hackney Centre for the Unemployed

Hackney Centre for the Unemployed is financed by the Council but is on the Council's hit list. And this in a borough where 1 in 5 is unemployed. It's ironic that as ratecapping glares at the community services considered be the least useful by civil servants, Hackney Centre for the Young Unemployed is showing some of the broad level of activity which is part of modern unemployment. And there is no provision elsewhere for the older unemployed and unwaged people except as part of the disadvantaged section of existing community projects. At the present, the centre has four organised groups attached to it and two in the pipeline. These are: Hackney Unemployment group (HUG) which is concerned with the social aspects of unemployment and publishes Update. Hackney Unemployed Action Group (HUAG) is concerned with the wider political issues affecting the unemployed. They meet every Tuesday at the Centre and publish a newsletter periodically. There is a Wageless Women's Group which will meet every Wednesday afternoon beginning on 17 April. And there is

the Women's Signing-on Campaign, which sees women as part of the workforce and therefore deserving of any benefits achieved by male workers (ansafon 254 0477).

All these groups began with only a few members and it is not necessary for them to be well known for them to function effectively.

The two groups now forming are the Mothers and Toddlers Group (for which contact Mabinty) and a group for unemployed Black Women and Mothers (contact Maurice - although male he has been given sanction to help organise meetings as he is a full time worker).

YTS SURVEY

Two other distinct groups also use the centre although they would not like to be considered 'organised'. There is at present a project under way conducted entirely by unemployed people. It is survey to be conducted among trainees on Youth Training Schemes. Although working full time these young people on YTS still have unemployed status.

This means that they are not covered by the normal workers' insurance. This survey has the support of local careers officers and the Trade Union Support Unit, and a section of the British Youth Council. However, the financial backing promised by the AEI is wavering even though such a survey has been suggested many times over the past few years.

OTHER PROJECTS

If this money is not forthcoming, the centre will pay the cost of printing and busfares which the AEI had promised. But this will reduce the funds available for other projects. The centre has also looked into ethnic monitoring at the DHSS and the Special Claims Control Unit (now at Arcola Street) and have must adopted the Roach Family Support Committee's Breaklinks resolution. There is a free creche for people who are not working on Tuesdays and a fuller rota of creche workers is being worked out. These 'workers' will be unemployed people. Anyone wishing to offer their services will be welcomed.

The centre is not restricted to full time unemployed, for unemployment is often scattered with one or two days' or weeks' or months' work. And people on Community Programmes, like those on YTS, are still classed as unemployed.

The centre has been used by groups of employed people by arrangement with the two full time workers. It is currently used on Monday evenings from 7pm by the Miners' Support Committee in Hackney.

It is intended that unemployed people involved with the centre will go out and visit other local groups and schools to discuss unemployment.

As part of the promotion of our work, we hope that people will come to the AGM on Tuesday, 23 April, at 7pm when we will be discussing the constitution of the centre, or to the workshop on the viability of community radio as a voice for the unemployed, unwaged or low-paid, at 1.30 on Thursday, 25 April.

Hackney Centre for the Unemployed is at Liberty Hall, 485 Kingsland Road, London E8. Tel: 249 8994

Help the front page

IF THEY DON'T
BRING BACK HPP
MONTHLY I THINK I'LL
NEVER RECOVER!



Once again, getting this issue of HPP onto the streets has been a struggle for that dedicated band of thwarted journalists, designers and sales representatives who occasionally bring you this revered organ.

We have to admit that our patience and enthusiasm are wearing thin. And yet, whenever we've published an issue recently (just three so far this year) we've been pleased and surprised by the response. "The best issue I've ever read", "Please keep HPP going, it's needed more than ever" are just two of the (completely unsolicited) testimonials received after the publication of the last issue.

Obviously, this heartens us and makes us think that our work on HPP has not been entirely wasted. But it is also obvious that there are thousands of Hackney people who have never seen a copy, despite the fact that HPP has been published now for over 12 years.

So where do we go from here? We are going to attempt some "outreach" work, by going out into the community and ask what HPP can do for them as well as what they can do for HPP. This could be a long process if we are to do it effectively and build what HPP has always lacked, a solid base as a true community newspaper for Hackney. We don't intend to stop publication while this continues, but it is unlikely that we will be able to get back to a regular monthly cycle until we get more active help.

That's where you fit in, readers. If you're an "activist" we're not asking you to give up even more of your precious time to involve yourself fully in HPP. But we are asking you to think of how HPP and your group or activity could work together. Ring one of us up and have a chat.

Of course, if your every spare moment is not yet filled with frantic activity, and your leisure hours are spent slumped in front of soap operas, then we would really like to see you as well. You can act out your Lou Grant fantasies in real life, polish up your green eyeshade and blue pencil and take up writing, sub-editing, design and a hundred and one other fun activities. All for absolutely no pay, but with the guarantee of some laughs, press passes to exotic places and the warm inner glow of good deeds done in a naughty world. We're waiting by the phone for your call, so give us a ring, or come along to a meeting on

WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE, 7.30pm, Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8.

Ring Charles on 241 1785, Sue on 806 6753 or John on 802 3905.

POLICE BRUTALITY



Two recent marches in Newham have been broken up and attacked by the police. Below we publish an eye witness account of the brutality on the first, in April.

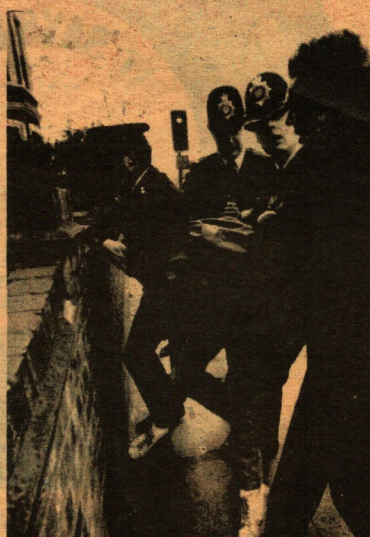
On Saturday, April 27, a demonstration in support of the Newham 7 and for Eustace Pryce, murdered by a white thug, was brutally attacked and stopped by the police outside Forest Gate police station.

These are the stark facts. But for me, in the middle of the crowd of demonstrators it was a terrifying and brutalising moment, as a huge mob of police charged at us, without any prior warning or provocation, smashing us against the barriers. It came as the climax to three hours of police snatch squads beating up and arresting innocent youths, and children causing serious injuries to a number of people.

We were shoved together into a tight circle of screaming, frightened people surrounded by a huge mob of police with no way out. I found myself wedged inside and then shoved at a speed I had no control over, into a wall.

Two police officers binged me hard against that wall and kicked me in the legs. No word was spoken. They could have done more to me but someone else distracted their attention.

A friend was shaking with uncontrollable fright, not



only at what was happening, to her - something she had never experienced before - but at what was happening all around us to friends and others. Mobs of police were running around grabbing people, shoving them to the ground, kicking and punching them and then dragging them away.

But there was not time to stop and help them, for we were being thrown and pushed along the pavement by another mob of police.

People were being arrested indiscriminately, mainly young women, as they rammed us for nearly a hundred yards along the street. 'Fuck off, Pakis', they were yelling.

It is now clear that the police had planned their attack on what was a peaceful march against racism and racist attacks, in order to stop the march going down Green Street and past the Duke of Edinburgh pub where white racists had attacked the Newham 7 in April last year.

Within a few minutes of the march reaching and pausing outside the Forest Gate police station around 3 pm, police snatch squads grabbed four people, hauling them over the barriers. This set the pattern for the afternoon as the march refused to move until these people had been released.

There are many stories of the brutality of those three hours - and much damning evidence from still photos and



These pictures of just one incident show the level of brutality. A black youth was pulled from the crowd and held by a number of police officers who tried to ram his head against a wall.

videos made. Thirtyfour people were arrested and charged - and some were beaten up inside West Ham police station where they were taken. One lad had his face punched and clothes ripped after coming to the rescue of a friend being beaten up inside the station by police trying to put handcuffs on him. I spoke to him and saw the damage to his face and clothes immediately after he left the inner part of the station.

A member of Hackney Youth in Progress was chased by a mob of police and punched in the stomach. She managed to escape but later had to be taken to hospital by ambulance after collapsing. She was refused an X-ray on the premise that she might be pregnant (!) and was referred to a psychiatrist.

To add further insult to all the injury, the media proceeded to cover up and lie during the following week. Organisers said that reporters who came to the demonstration mainly talked to the police. Not surprisingly, the police version of events was what emerged along with a whole load of confused inaccuracies. ITN cameras were seen filming just before the final attack by the police but then turned off when more than 500 police surged against us. They walked away, looking sheepish as people yelled at them to film it.

Support for sacked miners needed

Hackney's Miners' Support Committee is continuing to work on behalf of miners sacked or imprisoned during the strike.

Following the departure of Glenn Turner, Colin Tapper and the other miners from South Wales and Notts, the Support Committee is now chaired by Mel Thomas and Nigel Pickford, who were both sacked for their part in the occupation at Betteshanger colliery.

Nigel Pickford explained: "About 200 people were involved in the occupation, but the Coal Board picked out 29 people and victimised them. It just so happened that the whole branch committee of the union were among the 29 who were sacked."

The Miners' Support Committee Hackney is now



Sacked miners Nigel Pickford and Mel Thomas, from the Kent NUM, campaigning for an amnesty for imprisoned miners and for reinstatement for all miners sacked during, and as a result of the dispute. Over 200 people are in

jail for fighting for their jobs and the NCB is continuing to victimise miners for their political views or on account of their activity during the strike.

The DHSS has ruled that the miners are still in dispute with the NCB, and is continuing to withhold £16 a week in lieu of strike pay, which the miners don't receive. If the miners do sign on as unemployed, they automatically lose their right to reinstatement.

The miners who have been sacked and imprisoned, and their families, are in a desperate situation. The Miners Support Committee Hackney is appealing to everyone who supported the miners over the past year to maintain their financial support. Solidarity is as important now as ever.

The Miners Support Committee Hackney meets every Monday at 7.30pm at 485 Kingsland Road.

Take out a subscription to HPP and guarantee regular delivery! Just send a cheque/PO for £3.30 for a twelve issue subscription to Hackney People's Press, c/o Trojan, 10a Bradbury Street, N16. Please make cheques payable to HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS. Please add a donation if you can afford it!

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